

THE PROPAGATION OF THE GOSPEL
IMPORTANT AND NECESSARY.

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A

S E R M O N,

PREACHED IN
THE RELIEF CHURCH, ABERDEEN,

A T

THE ORDINATION OF
THE REV. MR. ALEXANDER BOWER,

TO THE
PASTORAL CHARGE OF THAT CONGREGATION,

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S E R M O N.

LUKE X. 2.

Therefore said he unto them, The harvest truly is great, but the labourers are few: pray ye therefore the Lord of the harvest, that he would send forth labourers into his harvest.

THESE words, addressed to the seventy disciples, had been uttered by the lips of Immanuel. He delegates them, to negotiate in his name with the kingdoms of the world, the great harvest, who had united their strength in hostilities against him. To defeat the object of such hostilities, Christ, particularly after his resurrection, accommodates the arrangements of negotiation, to the nature and universality of the dispute. Having intrusted the seventy with the outlines of the Treaty, which consists of two leading terms, the courts to be addressed are the understandings and consciences of men. By the first of those terms, he enjoins them to proclaim pardon and friendship to the most rebellious; by the second, to threaten the vengeance of their Court against all who would reject such overtures of reconciliation. To prove loyal to their trust, all stations must be treated with fidelity and candour. They must equally avoid the craft of adulation, to disarm the noble and civilized; as flinching, by timidity, from announcing to the savage the importance of their embassy. Whithersoever the seventy, and successors should go, the object of their Cabinet must openly be avowed, if unwelcome to rebels, if perilous to ambassadors: both which, from Abel's days to our own, the circumstances of the case have uniformly confirmed. Hence, verse 3d, "Go your ways; behold, I send you forth as lambs among wolves." Knowing that such a pointed forenotice

of danger, and the importance of the expedition, should now, as in future ages, have intimidated his disciples, our Lord is in the text peculiarly emphatic : which, however, is not so obvious from our version, as *send forth* should, literally, have been rendered *thrust out*. Hence we read, *Therefore said he unto them, The harvest truly is great, but the labourers are few : pray ye therefore the Lord of the harvest, that he would thrust out labourers into his harvest.*

The scope of this passage may be comprised under the following propositions, which we shall attempt to illustrate and apply. FIRST, That by reason of apparently unsurmountable difficulties, many of the Lord's people are intimidated from preaching the gospel. SECONDLY, That what is merely circumstantially intimidating in those difficulties, may be scripturally obviated. THIRDLY, That there are important considerations connected with propagating the gospel, which furnish powerful motives to enforce the exhortation, " Pray ye," &c.

FIRST, By reason of apparently unsurmountable difficulties, many of the Lord's people may be intimidated from preaching the gospel ; and the *Mysteries* to be explored constitute a principal difficulty. Mystery, in a religious acceptation, implies a truth revealed by God, which is beyond the penetration of our reason to discover, or fully to comprehend when it is revealed. The mysteries of Revelation are Communicable, and Incommunicable. Incommunicable, as the being of God, the unity of nature, of power, and of will in the Godhead ; the union of two natures in the Divine person of Christ ; sovereignty of decrees, remote prophecy, and the like. Communicable, as that there is a God, a Trinity, two natures united, and distinct, in the person of Christ ; eternal decrees, an everlasting covenant, various prophecies, unchangeable doctrines, the principles on which a sinner is justified, an heaven and an hell ; that there shall be a resurrection and a general judgment ; that the holy shall be happy, and the unholy miserable through eternity ; and that God is just in his procedure to both.

Although such mysteries are incomprehensible to our limited powers, to the Father of lights all his works are

known from the beginning. Hence, what we consider impenetrable darkness in divine things, is but their celestial splendor dazzling our feeble intellect almost unto very blindness. Therefore let us guard against insinuating, that such mysteries are obscure in themselves, and in the understanding of the Godhead; whereas it is the uncreated sublimity and effulgence of their nature which preclude finite beings from approaching to scrutinize them. Will the wanton tribes of sceptics deliberately lampoon those mysteries *? We glory that they are eternally removed from the comprehension of angels and men. Hence, while many of us may be intimidated from preaching the gospel, because of the mysteries of Revelation, we avail ourselves of Paul's impressive diction to communicate our believing admiration of them, "O the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! how unsearchable are his judgments, and his ways past finding out †."

* We challenge those sons of reason, to analyze, on their own principles, a pile of grass, a particle of sand; to unfold the union and mutual operation of body and mind: still they dispute not the being, and consistency of those things whose substances and laws they cannot develop. Are the minutest substances in nature inexplicable even to adepts in Science—in nature, which God by his word commanded from nothing to existence, sketched by one dash of his pencil to its variegated shades, supporting it still, preserving the symmetry of its parts, and which, by energy of the same word, shall again be remanded to its original nonentity? how much more must that system be mysterious, which received birth from eternity in the understanding of the Godhead; which for thousands of years has been uniformly verging to the perfection of its design, and whose glorious effects shall keep pace in future with the very existence of Jehovah! Then, upon your own principles, blush with repenting shame; stop the mad career of your scorn; retract your unmanly thrusts at God's moral government, and the mysteries of scripture. Once comprehend any thing, and then must it cease to indicate the traces of Deity. Hence, by your reasoning, he must cease to be infinite, and his ways to be past finding out; than which, he would sooner cease to exist. Is it possible, that the systems by which God hath revealed his wisdom, power, goodness, and mercy, can be scrutably explored by created beings? Impossible. Doth not the great cloud of witnesses, arising from prophecy and miracles, attesting at your bar, harmonize in the testimony to substantiate the inspiration of scripture? Do not the invisible things of God from the creation of the world appear, being understood by the things that are made, even his eternal power and Godhead? so that Atheists are without excuse. Rom. i. 20. Viewing the circumstances with candour, whether are the reasonings of Sceptics, Infidels, Deists, and pretended Atheists, less blasphemous than philosophical? "Seest thou a man wise in his own conceit? There is more hope of a fool than of him." Prov. xxvi. 12. What, then, shall we say of those sons of reason, if they persist to arraign the incomprehensible God at the bar of their depraved and limited understanding? To do justice to the opinion which they conceive of their own importance, we deem ourselves bound to bid them adieu, in Job's address to Zophar and his friends, till we have the controversy decided before the judgment-seat of Christ: "No doubt but ye are the people, and wisdom shall die with you." Job xii. 2.

† Rom. xi. 33.

The limited capacity of human powers to illustrate the mysteries of Revelation, may intimidate some believers from propagating the gospel. Though much of the ambiguity of diction be owing to the obscurity of our ideas, yet our ideas, in many cases, may be just and correct, whilst poverty of language prevents us from communicating them intelligibly : and our embarrassment must uniformly be analogous to the subject of discussion. Hence the personal and official character of Deity ; the display of infinite perfections in creation, providence, and grace ; the guilt and misery of human nature ; the principles on which God is propitious ; the realities of a future world ; being subjects interwoven with preaching the gospel, how incompetent is man for the task. Accordingly, some believers of the most enlarged mind, declining the harvest of Christ, may be ready to adopt the apology of the son of Hilkiah, “ Ah, Lord God, behold, I cannot speak, for I am a child *.”

The difficulties to which we are exposed in declaring the truth, may intimidate some believers from preaching the gospel. Though all the human race be reduced to holy and profane, though the gospel be the most philanthropic system that ever appeared in the world, and though its teachers endeavour to unite the tenderness of love with fidelity, yet how frequently is truth misapprehended. In illustrating doctrines and frames, the holy may be perplexed ; the profane treat vital religion with scorn : in delineating characters, the holy shun the consolation peculiar to their state ; hypocrites abuse the promises : in addressing conscience, the holy may be discouraged ; the profane irritated against truth and their own interest : in maintaining discipline, the holy may be jealous of conniving partiality ; delinquents consider themselves despotically treated. Oppressed with many such perplexities, and breathing in a sobbing sigh, “ Who is sufficient for these things ? ” a variety of disinterested considerations admonish faithful ministers to conceal in a bleeding heart, the convolutions of their sorrow, imitating in their demeanour the tacit grief of a weaned child †.

* Jerem. i. 6.

† Psal. cxxxi. 2.

Nor is candour, in every circumstance, the medium through which the motives and actions of ministers are apprehended or represented. Their faithful discharge of duty is stiled harshness; their open reproof of sin, malevolent imprudence; their firmness, obstinacy; their application in retirement, monastic; their occasional reserve, haughtiness; their holy walk, moroseness; their openness, levity; their affability is frequently abused; their indications of merited regard are ascribed to partiality. What torrents of calumny, swelled into billows of invective, dash against true ministers! Hence, should they escape the censure of believers, which is not always the case, are they not to endure the cross, not seldom even to death, imbittered by the invented aggravations of devils and wicked men*? We naturally recoil at danger. Hence the anticipation of trials rendered Moses obstinately reluctant to undertake the emancipation of Israel; while the furnace of persecution had extorted these unadvised words from Jeremiah, "Then I said, I will not make mention of him, nor speak any more in his name†."

Unsuccessfulness in winning souls, may intimidate some believers from preaching the gospel. "Who hath believed our report? and to whom is the arm of the Lord revealed‡?" is a complaint familiar to the messengers of grace in every age. How unconcerned are the bulk of men for their lasting interests! Coming to the sanctuary, from any motive but the love of the truth that they might be saved, or reading the scriptures from any disposition but a desire for instruction, they palm contradictions on

* In establishing Missions among the heathen, many difficulties, besides, must be encountered. To acquire foreign languages, blamelessly conforming to established customs, securing the confidence of volatile minds, committing life to savage protection, repressing sensual habits, simplifying religious truths to infantile ideas, submitting to the hardships of clime and accommodation, maintaining, amidst a variety of temptations, the purity of an heir of glory, can only be accomplished by a copious enjoyment of the wisdom and love of Jesus. Nor is it so arduous persuading nominal Christians to idolatry, as dissuading savage nations from their brutal divinities. "Wherefore I will yet plead with you, saith the Lord, and with your childrens children will I plead. For pass over the isles of Chittim, and see; and send unto Kedar, and consider diligently, and see if there be such a thing. Hath a nation changed their gods, which are yet no gods? but my people have changed their glory, for that which doth not profit: be astonished, O ye heavens, at this, and be horribly afraid, be ye desolate, saith the Lord. For my people have committed two evils: they have forsaken me, the fountain of living waters, and hewed them out cisterns, broken cisterns that can hold no water." Jerem. ii. 9—14.

† Jerem. xx. 9.

‡ Isa. liii. 1.

the bible, convert the turn of an expression in the speaker to a stumbling-block, or hold up the miscarriages of believers as a dispensation to their crimes and vices; and hence lamentably exemplify the description of inspiration. "But if our gospel be hid, it is hid to them that are lost; in whom the god of this world hath blinded the minds of them that believe not, lest the light of the glorious gospel of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine unto them *." The opposite effects produced by the gospel, and the concern they excite in faithful ministers, Paul, from experience, represents in a striking light, referring the subject, in the form of a question too delicately important for himself to decide. "We are unto God a sweet favour of Christ, in them that are saved, and in them that perish; to the one we are the favour of death unto death; and to the other the favour of life unto life: and who is sufficient for these things †?" Such declarations must always solemnize, and frequently overwhelm a philanthropic minister.

Methinks I converse with his views and feelings setting about his pulpit preparations. Supplicating what message the Lord intends for his hearers, and being officially prepared, he approaches the assembly with trembling steps. Proceeding under the influence of sanctified reverence, becoming a worm of the dust, and the capacity in which he appears, the honour of the Deity, the importance of truth, the value of souls, some to be comforted others to be roused, some hardening themselves and others sinning on to the last flying moments of their season of grace, mutually and alternately revolving in his solemnized mind,—I pretend not to describe his affecting views of a future state, nor yet from what accumulated variety of sorrow he pours out his heart in retirement, having withdrawn from the gates of Zion. Thus deeply interested, other official duties render him active through the week. Expecting fruit, he concernedly surveys as he moves along: but, a few scattered appearances of slow vegetation excepted, his mind is peculiarly overcast,—the more numerous plants in his department of the vineyard exhibiting the perishing aspect of moral sterility. Perplexedly discouraged, he retires to the field of meditation, whilst

* 2 Cor. iv. 3.

† 2 Cor. ii. 15.

his pensive reflection suggests a plenitude of ideas pregnant with anguish surpassing description.

Peradventure he will employ the aid of soliloquy to disclose the bitterness of his heart; which may we be allowed to conjecture? "Am I a child of God by faith in Christ Jesus? Has mine eye been single in assuming the office? Do I devote myself wholly to the duties of my trust? Do I ardently love souls? Is the coming of Christ's kingdom my desire and prayer? How then is the heaven over my head brass, and the earth that is under me iron? O that my head were waters, and mine eyes a fountain of tears, that I might weep day and night for the slain of the daughter of my people. Look down from heaven, O Lord, and behold from the habitation of thy holiness, and of thy glory: where is thy zeal and thy strength, the founding of thy bowels and of thy mercies towards me? are they restrained *?" Having, in throbbing accents, after this manner discharged the heavings of his soul, his train of reflection leads him to take an impartial view of the solemnly conspicuous station in which his office shall place him at judgment and through eternity.

Hence, the account to be rendered of the ministry, may intimidate some believers from preaching the gospel. "We must all appear before the judgment-seat of Christ †." In that appearance, ministers account not for personal religion only, but also for doctrine, discipline, love to, and vigilancy over their flock. Hence the admonition, "Obey them that have the rule over you, and submit yourselves; for they watch for your souls, as they that must give an account: that they may do it with joy and not with grief: for that is unprofitable for you ‡." These words pointing at two opposite accounts of the ministry, it may not be improper that we advert to some circumstances connected with them; and as many of the ministers of Christ, in seasons of despondency, consign themselves to the doom of the hireling, we must, however reluctantly, touch upon some features in his character.—Illustrating essential truths, he conceals his genuine sentiments in the sophistry of diction, or by effrontery openly explodes them.—Addressing characters, he shuns to be explicit, lest he may

* Deut. xxviii. 23. Jer. ix. 1, 2. Isa. lxiii. 15. † 2 Cor. v. 10. ‡ Heb. xiii. 17.

either offend, or expose to open reprehension the known inconsistencies in his own behaviour. In maintaining discipline, he is neither tender nor faithful. Admiring the rotundity of periods, which he may have composed by the industry of plagiarism, he is jealously watchful lest the word of God should obtain any conspicuous advantage in his sermons. Maintaining the dignity of human nature, he virtually rejects Christ as the end of the law for righteousness *. Extolling sincere obedience, he artfully endeavours to frustrate the grace of God in the justification of a sinner †. Metamorphosing legal, heathen morality, for true holiness; urging his audience to work out their own salvation with fear and trembling; he criminally withholds, that it is God who works to will and to do of his good pleasure ‡. Nor does experimental religion escape his public frown. Cautioning his people against harbouring such a guest, he considers himself the pattern of moderation, when baptizing it with a sneer, the devoted offspring of fanaticism: while the liberality of his mind permits him uniformly to supplicate for the church to which he belongs, or the denomination by whose creed he is distinguished. When pastoral duties should occupy his care, neglecting the poor of his flock, he cringes to the rich; attends their parade of amusement; listens obsequiously at their table to the turn of conversation, however contrary to the purity of his order: Does he not also, circulating the jovial glass, join the chorus of the drunkard's song? or the farm and market are graced with his presence, while the study and closet are lamenting his absence. Peradventure some of his flock go before him to eternity. He dies also. Impenitent? "If the blind lead the blind, both shall fall into the ditch ||." Still there is a suspension of the full retribution, till the fruits of his ministry in those he left behind, or in their childrens children, are arrived at maturity; till the last generation of mankind are ripe for eternity; and till the wheels of nature have accomplished their last circumvolution.

Hark! the last trump awakes him, and his flock, from their silent folds. He approaches the great white throne as their leader, to render his account. Presenting his doctrine and example, his flock standing in the effects

* Rom. x. 4.

† Gal. iii. 21.

‡ Phil. ii. 12, 13.

|| Matt. xv. 14.

produced on them by both, he is proved an hireling; he stands aghast; the doom in ancient prophecy is verified in his case. "But if the watchman see the sword come, and blow not the trumpet, and the people be not warned: if the sword come and take any person from among them, he is taken away in his iniquity: but his blood will I require at the watchman's hand *." With what an indignant frown shall the Judge dismiss from the bar such a watchman, and the unholy of his flock! What shall be their mutual dispositions, commencing their procession, entering the regions of hell, and sustaining endless wo, is not the province of a finite being either to conceive or describe.

Although the true ministers of Christ shall never be condemned, yet, from the extensive view which their improved and illuminated understandings have of divine truth, of the value of souls, of the account to be judicially balanced between pastor and people, and of the realities of a future state, how frequently, in seasons of darkness, unbelief, and temptation, do they consider all the threats in scripture, denounced against ministers, who live and die under the guilt of a Saviour crucified afresh, the guilt of murdered truths, murdered gifts, and murdered souls of men, collected in one tremendous cloud, fulminated by the voice of Omnipotence, louder than the thunder of the sky, bursting around their devoted heads, flashing damnation into their consciences, and hurling them to everlasting flames. Accordingly, such of the Lord's people as are directing their views to the ministry, having concerns of this nature crowding into their anxious minds, though not contrary to their prevailing desire, are yet, in some respects, thrust out into the harvest. To endeavour scripturally to obviate what is merely circumstantial in the difficulties pointed out, constitutes the

SECOND Branch of our subject. That there are mysteries in Revelation—that human faculties are incompetent to explore them—that hardships must be endured in declaring the truth—that want of success in the ministry is discouraging—and that the account to be rendered of our stewardship is solemn; we readily acknowledge. Nor

* Ezek. xxxiii. 6.

is it intended to attempt extenuating their essential importance, but scripturally to obviate the collateral circumstances which render them intimidating to the people of God.

FIRST, There are mysteries to explore. Are we not satisfied, that those mysteries are divine? that we cordially embrace them, without attempting to comprehend them? else we virtually espouse the notion of the sceptic. "Canst thou by searching find out God? canst thou find out the Almighty unto perfection? It is high as heaven, what canst thou do? deeper than hell, what canst thou know? The measure thereof is longer than the earth, and broader than the sea. If he cut off, or shut up, or gather together, who can hinder him? For he knoweth vain men; he seeth wickedness also: will he not then consider it? For vain man would be wise: though man be born as the wild ass's colt *." Hence, in exploring truth, we should consider the limits competent to finite beings; otherwise we may neglect, as beneath our notice, what is level to our capacity; perplex ourselves in fruitless investigation; and afford the despisers of revealed religion cause to exult, when they perceive our vanity and zeal equally mortified and exposed. How many mysteries has God revealed in his word, which, in their very nature, are not so much intended for discussion, as to exhibit a connected view of the principles by which he regulates creation, providence, and grace. Accommodating itself to our infantile capacity, the scripture is but the outline of those three grand departments, which, to understand satisfactorily, is reserved for the light of eternity, and the maturity of our faculties. Because God, in condescension, has given us an outline of his works and designs, and of our relation to him, shall that condescension render one class of men sceptical, and another prying? Ingratitude! But the human mind arrogantly pursues mysteries and futurities. And how sinfully perplexed are some even of the Lord's people occasionally thus employed; whereas the incomprehensibility of God and his works constitutes one principal source of our eternal joy.

To correct prying curiosity, the scripture abounds with

prohibitions, of which the case of Israel; in many instances, is a striking exemplification *. Hence the conclusion of the son of Amram, "the secret things belong unto the Lord our God: but those things which are revealed belong unto us †." Accordingly, the church is warned against such as pretend to the investigation of mysteries. "Beware lest any man spoil you through philosophy and vain deceit; after the tradition of men, after the rudiments of the world, and not after Christ—Intruding into those things which he hath not seen, vainly puffed up by his fleshly mind ‡." How explicitly revealed are man's

* Sinai was the first visible throne whence Jehovah unveiled his splendor to Israel; but was not that splendor greatly concealed by a cloud? And while Moses is called up to mediate for them, they are prohibited on pain of death to approach the mount. To accommodate their itinerant circumstances, Moses is commanded to rear a Tabernacle and an Ark, forming a Court and Throne, whence the God of Abraham would communicate his legislative and propitiatory glory: whilst every article of internal furniture must be concealed from the camp. This fabric being reared, certain from the tribe of Levi were admitted to the Court, while the Throne was accessible to the high priest exclusively, and that but once a year. Even Moses durst not approach the Ark. By the cloud, which constituted God's visible robe, from which he audibly communicated his will, and which he had transferred from Sinai to his portable Court and Throne, the marches and encampments of the church were regulated. For when he would have his Court and Throne pitched or struck, the attitude of the cloud proclaimed the signal; still the ensigns of divine royalty are under seal. When the Philistines removed this Throne from its native Court, men thence concluding that its honour had departed. Dagon falling before it, the Bethshemites looking into it, and Uzzah touching it with his hand, had experienced by sudden death, that God is unchangeable, and that the secrets of his Cabinet shall not be pryed into with impunity: of which, the circumstances of Solomon's Temple exhibit a further illustration. Have the figures of good things been so profoundly concealed? As Christ, by his advent and gospel, has disclosed the typical mysteries of the Aaronic dispensation; as he has constituted his people kings and priests, and, by his own blood, has obtained access for us to the holiest of all; with what reverence should we imitate the solemnity of the high priest, when he approached the Ark on the anniversary atonement! See Exod. xix—xl. Num. iv. Josh. iii. 1 Sam. vii. 2 Sam. vi. 1 Kings vii. Heb. viii. ix. x.

Early did man desire to become omniscient. On that rock commenced the shipwreck of mankind. Ye shall be *as gods*, Gen. iii. 5. Why was not the sophistry of the reasoning, *as gods*, detected? Because our progenitors would be omniscient? In that respect we are after their image. The reverence with which holy angels wait for the knowledge of mysteries, is worthy of imitation. They know the importance of mysteries, and the province of their own understandings. While they desire new discoveries from the unfoldings of the scheme of grace, they submit their understandings to the providence and Spirit of God, the mutual interpreters in the church for disclosing the mysteries of inspiration. Eph. iii. 8—13. 1 Pet. i. 12. Our Lord, whose human nature of all created intelligences must enjoy the greatest intimacy with the secrets of Deity, tacitly rebukes the prying arrogance of his disciples, frankly declaring, that, *as man*, his knowledge did not furnish him with the period at which the day of judgment should commence, for which they eagerly solicited information. "But of that day, and of that hour, knoweth no man; no, not the angels which are in heaven; neither the Son, but the Father." Mark xiii. 32. And shall not the deference of holy angels, and of our Lord's human nature, respecting the deep things of God, convince every one of us, that finite capacities should, and must be satisfied, both in time and eternity, with a competent, but imperfect knowledge of mysteries?

† Deut. xxix. 29.

‡ Col. ii. 8. 18.

misery and salvation,—the principal subjects for pulpit discussion ; while simplicity is enjoined. “ And the Lord answered me, and said, Write the vision, and make it plain upon tables, that he may run that readeth it*.” Hence, while ministers should be wholly devoted to the duties of their trust, with what filial reverence and simplicity of heart, whether exploring the mysterious or less intricate parts of inspiration, does it become us to commit the direction of our intellect to the holy Ghost, whose prerogative it is to unfold what he deems necessary to reveal of the mysteries concealed beyond the stretch of our natural penetration. Nor do we by this surrender, as some proudly assert, make a sacrifice of our understanding, but of its delusive, detestable pride: and having made this sacrifice, we exult that not a particle of our rationality is lost. Then we become sensible, that our mind drops its disease, not its vigour ; its meanness, not its dignity ; its bondage, not its freedom. Which leads to

Obviate what is merely circumstantial in the scruples arising from our limited capacities to develop the mysteries of Revelation. Of the different sources which contribute to supply us in the present case, we avail ourselves principally of the displays of God’s wisdom, by the means employed in the church to promote the interest of religion. The wisdom of God, in this respect, observably commenced, by employing longevity in the antediluvian church, to keep pure the tradition of divine truth, as a written revelation had not been granted. The same mean, to a certain degree, was continued from Noah to Moses. And of Moses it is very observable, that before he is qualified to emancipate and govern Israel, he must, by learning humility in the Arabian desert, forget that by adoption he had been called the son of Pharaoh’s daughter. Nor is the wisdom of which we speak less conspicuous in the laws and vicissitudes by which Israel was governed till the advent of Messiah : the circumstances of whose nativity, and those of propagating his gospel, exhibit that wisdom in meridian splendor. Jesus, to be born in magnificence, did not appear when the tribe of Judah and the house of

* Hab. ii. 2.

David flourished in royal and political glory; but when David's house was nearly extinct, and the sceptre trembling in the hand of Judah. Born in a low condition, rich and poor had access to his company. Nor did he propagate his gospel by angels, as, from the case of John*, their celestial brightness might dazzle us to undue veneration. The treasure is put in earthen vessels†. Nor are these, in general, from the nobles of the earth, as they might behave haughtily, and as their secular influence might contribute to proselyte more than the evidence of truth rationally operating on the understanding and conscience. For every man, however little, makes a figure in his own eyes. Accordingly, though the first preachers of the gospel had been called from the meanest occupations, of what importance did they consider themselves. Hence Peter, in name of the rest, said unto Jesus, "Behold, we have forsaken all, and followed thee; what shall we have therefore‡?" To obtain humble, is more difficult than able, labourers. "Therefore God openeth the ears of men, and sealeth their instruction. That he may withdraw man from his purpose, and hide pride from man§." Accordingly, we may observe of the Lord's people in the ministry, and those otherwise promoting the interests of religion, men of different stations and talents. Conferring what they possess of either, he has a just claim on their exertion; which is evinced by the arrangements of his wisdom in every age. Hence Moses is called to deliver and govern Israel, being taught the accomplishments of Pharaoh's court, and deep humility in the habit of a shepherd, during the exile of forty years||; Elisha from the plow|||; David from the sheep-fold††; Amos from the herdsmen of Tekoa§§; the first preachers from fishing boats and tolls of custom§; Saul from the feet of Gamaliel††; Luke from among the physicians**; Zenas from among the lawyers¶; while Apollos adds grace to the whole||†. In this group of different talents and stations, so illustrative of the wisdom of God in the selection of instruments to promote the interest of religion, "the foot cannot say, Because I am not the hand, I am not of the body||*."

* Rev. xix. 10. xxii. 8. † 2 Cor. iv. 7. ‡ Matt. xix. 27. § Job. xxxiii. 16. 17.
 || Exod. ii. Acts vii. Heb. xi. ||| 1 Kings xix. †† Psal. lxxvii. §§ Amos i. 1.
 § Matt. iv. ix. †† Acts xxiii. ** Col. iv. ¶ Tit. iii. †† Acts xviii. ||* 1 Cor. xii.

Natural and acquired talents are of God ; for he alone is perfect reason. Hence, we should prize them when properly directed ; but if abused, while they prove injurious to mankind, God, despising them, honours the meanest instruments to accomplish the most valuable purposes : which is forcibly illustrated in the first chapter of first Corinthians. Accordingly, valuable as we allow natural endowments to be, a mind subdued by grace, possessing a competency of knowledge, bids fairer for being useful in the ministry, than an elevated genius, cultivated by science, however orthodox in speculative theology, if a stranger to experimental religion. And to convince all intelligent worlds, that the end of preaching is not so much to explore mysteries, as, by simple truths, to bring Christ and sinners to a vital union, those even of the Lord's people in the ministry, possessing the most shining parts, by which, undesignedly, they exceed the capacity of the bulk of their hearers, are not always the most successful. " To the poor the gospel is preached *." Are not the poor, for the most part, strangers to metaphysical reasoning ? Hence they cannot derive much benefit from sermons, however evangelically composed, if Christ and sin be not clearly and simply represented. While, therefore, the gospel dispensation presents a conspicuous theatre, on which the most brilliant talents may illustriously shine, we are persuaded that exploring mystery is not the object of preaching,—that the world, by philosophic wisdom, knew not, cannot know God ; and that nothing but the doctrines of the cross, plainly, rationally, and importunately declared, have been, and, in ordinary cases, ever shall be, countenanced by the Spirit in drawing men to the Saviour. Hence Paul's exemplification of his own manner, " and I, brethren, when I came among you, came not with excellency of speech, or of wisdom, declaring unto you the wisdom of God. For I determined not to know any thing among you, save Jesus Christ, and him crucified. Now we have received, not the spirit of the world, but the spirit which is of God ; that we might know the things that are freely given to us of God : which things also we speak, not in the words which man's wisdom teacheth, but which the holy Ghost teacheth ; com-

* Luke vii. 22.

paring spiritual things with spiritual *. And what commentary can more elucidate divine truth, than producing the evidence of one part of itself, to confirm the testimony witnessed by another? How, then, comes it to pass, that a sermon is not deemed fashionably composed, whose principal ornaments are derived from inspiration? Because, the bible being antiquated, do our hearers best understand our own diction? This is virtually asserting, that the holy Ghost, who inspired the scriptures, is incapable of elegant composition. Blasphemous! Rather, let truth be acknowledged, we are necessitated to abound in the dialect of Ashdod, not being fluent in the Jews' language †. Is any language fitter than that of scripture, to preach Christ crucified to immortal souls?

When we hear frothy diction, rendered still more nauseous by theatrical gesture; Christ's personal and official glory, if at all, but dimly seen; are we not ready to conclude, that the gospel is either a cunningly devised fable, or the speaker a disguised comedian, exhibiting a farce from the pulpit? Why despise the manly, grave, pathetic language and address, which our office and theme, of all others, are so eminently calculated to inspire? which every thinking person expects, and every believer desires, from the pulpit and the man, who, addressing God, and immortal souls in his name, is of Adam's offspring on earth most solemnly interested to act for eternity: indeed it is not to be wondered at, that such believers as contemplate oratory in the mirror of fashion, if not conscious of possessing talents which place them on equal terms with their celebrated contemporaries, may be intimidated from preaching the gospel ‡. Whether is this diffidence, or

* 1 Cor. ii. 1, 2. 12, 13.

† Neh. xiii. 23, 24.

‡ Is it urged in defence of elegant composition, "that the preacher sought to find out acceptable words." Ecc. xii. 10, 11. That a slovenly speaker is a disgrace to any subject, especially the gospel, is readily granted. Nay, simple elegance is both desirable and attainable in preaching the gospel; but let that elegance be founded on the intrinsic excellence of the gospel itself, and not on the fashionable taste of the ungodly. But having interrupted the royal preacher, let him finish his sentence, that we may ascertain the quality of his acceptable words; "and that which was written was upright, even words of truth. The words of the wise are as goads, and as nails fastened by the masters of assemblies, which are given from one shepherd." Such words being consonant to truth, are acceptable to God, and his people; but who will assert that they are acceptable to carnal men? as, like nails driven by an hammer, they pierce through the vitals of our lusts and idols. Accordingly, when the Spirit employs his word; by the preaching of the gospel, to break the stony heart, Jerem. xxiii. 29. sinners, at the first, are exasperated against God, and truth, and the instrument of their conviction. "Hast thou found me, O mine enemy? I hate Micaiah, for he

pride? Can it be stiled sanctified humility? Or is there not reason to conjecture, that the fear of man, which bringeth a snare; as much as our reverence for truth, and our consciousness of imbecility, obtains in the present case? Are we not led to infer, that Moses' diffidence to undertake the deliverance of Israel from Egyptian bondage, proceeded as much from anticipation of the reproach of men, as the solemnity of the work? Having displeased the Lord, shall we act his part, notwithstanding his reproof being recorded for our admonition? "And the Lord said unto him, Who hath made man's mouth, or who maketh the dumb, or deaf, or the seeing, or the blind? Have not I the Lord *?"

We proceed to consider the difficulties to be encountered in discharging official duties. "In this world ye shall have tribulation †." "Yea, and all who will live godly in Christ Jesus, shall suffer persecution †." Hence, till the seed of the woman, and that of the serpent, be reconciled, there is no alternative; we must take up the cross, or perish with the world §. To persuade us that the cross is unavoidable, Christ, leaving us an example, bore it in every form, with fortitude and patience. "I gave my back to the smiters, and my cheeks to them that plucked off the hair: I hid not my face from shame and spitting ||." Hence the admonition, "Remember the words that I said unto you, The servant is not greater than his Lord ¶." "Therefore consider him that endured such contradiction of sinners against himself, lest ye be wearied and faint in your minds *." Hear his benediction, "Blessed are ye

doth not prophesy good concerning me, but evil." 1 Kings xxi. 20. xxii. 9. "The carnal mind is enmity against God," Romans viii. 7. The incestuous pair, because he reproved them, beheaded the Baptist. Mark vi. 17—30. Was it not for declaring truth that the Jews hated our Lord? John viii. 40. Sinners, when arrested, being strangers to holiness, surrender more from terror than love. It is some time after a day of power has savingly taken hold of us, that God, and his people, and the doctrines of his word, are acceptable to our understandings, consciences, and affections. The shadow of the gospel, decorated with excellency of speech and wisdom, obtains the blandishment of carnal men, while the divine eloquence of the prophets, of God manifest in the flesh, and of his apostles, was despised, and gave offence, when employed to represent the spirituality and purity of truth, and to expose and reprove the wiles and hypocrisy of their hearers. Hence the speaker, whose eloquence renders him most acceptable to unconverted men, because, generally, he dwells on the surface of negative holiness, is most contemptible to God, and godly men. "Ye cannot serve God and Mammon." Matthew vi. 24.

* Exod. iv. 11. † John xvi. 33. ‡ 2 Tim. iii. 12. § Gen. iii. 14, 15. Luke xiv. 27. || Isa. l. 6. ¶ John xv. 20. * Heb. xii. 3.

when men shall revile you, and persecute you, and shall say all manner of evil against you falsely for my sake. Rejoice, and be exceeding glad; for great is your reward in heaven: for so persecuted they the prophets which were before you *.” While this benediction embraces all his people, let the faithful ministers of Jesus hear his peculiar promise to them, including all of a like nature; “Lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world †.” That the presence of Christ not only supports his ministers enduring the hardships connected with the discharge of their office, but also enlivens personal religion in their own souls, incorporating the triumphs of eternal glory with their sentiments, enjoyments, and expectations, we adduce the testimony of an apostle to substantiate. “I reckon that the sufferings of the present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us. Therefore we glory in tribulation also, knowing that tribulation worketh patience; and patience, experience; and experience, hope: and hope maketh not ashamed, because the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts, by the holy Ghost which is given to us—Now, thanks be unto God, who always causeth us to triumph in Christ, and maketh manifest the favour of his knowledge by us in every place ‡.”

Thus animated by Christ's presence and grace, love to men should reconcile us to the cross. Hence Paul declares, “I endure all things for the elect's sakes, that they also may obtain the salvation which is in Christ Jesus with eternal glory §.” Accordingly, though the Corinthian and Galatian churches, which he had planted afterwards, questioned his apostolic authority and commission, yet he still loved them, which he communicates to the former with emotions of integrity and warmth. “In all things approving ourselves as the ministers of God, in much patience, in afflictions, in necessities, in distresses, in stripes, in imprisonments, in tumults, in labours, in watchings, in fastings, by pureness, by knowledge, by long-suffering, by kindness, by the holy Ghost, by love unfeigned. By the word of truth, by the power of God, by the armour of righteousness on the right hand and on

* Matt. v. 11, 12. † Matt. xxviii. 20. ‡ Rom. viii. 18, v. 3—6. 2 Cor. ii. 14.

§ 2 Tim. ii. 10.

the left : by honour and dishonour, by evil report, and good report ; as deceivers and yet true : as unknown and yet well known ; as dying, and, behold, we live ; as chastened, and not killed : as sorrowful, yet always rejoicing ; as poor, yet making many rich : as having nothing, yet possessing all things. O ye Corinthians, our mouth is opened unto you, our heart is enlarged, ye are not straitened in us, but ye are straitened in your own bowels. Now for a recompence in the same, (I speak as unto my children,) be ye also enlarged *.” What benevolent sentiments are here expressed by the man who once breathed nothing but slaughter ! Then you who love God and man, go and do likewise. Halt not between two opinions. Shrink not from the banner of the cross. Or shall your supineness leave room to conjecture that the love of Christ, though dwelling in you, has yet to impress invincibleness on your renewed nature ? Taking unto you the whole armour of God, come forth as good soldiers of Jesus Christ †. “ For the weapons of our warfare are not carnal, but mighty through God to the pulling down of strong holds ; Casting down imaginations, and every high thing that exalteth itself against the knowledge of God, and bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ ‡.” “ But the slothful man saith, There is a lion without, I shall be slain in the streets §.”

How frequently do we anticipate dangers in obeying the Lord which shall never exist, and hence how sharply he upbraids us for cowardice ; “ I, even I, am he that comforteth you : who art thou, that thou shouldest be afraid of a man that shall die, and of the son of man, which shall be made as grass ? And forgettest the Lord thy maker, that hath stretched forth the heavens, and laid the foundations of the earth ? and hast feared continually every day, because of the fury of the oppressor, as if he were ready to destroy ? and where is the fury of the oppressor || ?” Or, should we be arrested in declaring the truth ; should we be prevented from fleeing from one city to another ¶ ; should the oppressor be permitted to wreak his unprovoked fury, and destroy, “ to die to us is gain **.” We sheath the sword of the Spirit, and wield

* 2 Cor. vi. 4—14.
§ Prov. xxii. 13.

† Eph. vi. 11. 2 Tim. ii. 3.
|| Isa. li. 12, 13.

‡ 2 Cor. x. 4, 5.
¶ Matt. x. 23. ** Phil. i. 21.

palms of victory; exchange garments rolled in blood, for white robes; dismiss fightings without, and fears within; and, congratulating conquest and peace, remove from the cries of the wounded, and the groans of the dying, to the land of hosannas and immortality *. “It is a faithful saying, For if we be dead with him, we shall also live with him: if we suffer, we shall also reign with him †.” But want of

Success in the ministry is discouraging. It remains that we be faithful stewards. “Herein let us exercise ourselves, to have always a conscience void of offence towards God and towards man ‡.” “For our rejoicing is this, the testimony of our conscience; that in simplicity and godly sincerity, not with fleshly wisdom, but by the grace of God, we have had our conversation in the world §.” Let us ever remember, whether desiring our own salvation or that of others, that our exertions are neither meritorious nor effectual. “Neither is he that planteth any thing, neither he that watereth; but God that giveth the increase ||.” With such dispositions, let us be instant in season and out of season ¶. “Behold the husbandman waiteth for the precious fruit of the earth, and hath long patience for it, until he receive the early and latter rain *.” “For he that observeth the winds shall not sow; and he that regardeth the clouds shall not reap. Therefore in the morning sow thy seed, and in the evening withhold not thine hand: for thou knowest not whether shall prosper, either this or that; or whether both shall be alike good †.” With what patient fortitude do the sons of adventure and commerce prosecute their designs, as through an host of disappointed predecessors and contemporaries; and will the sons of Zion be less persevering? the former enduring hardships to amass perishing riches; the subject of the latter the salvation of souls: and when contrasted, how disproportioned, the Creator of both being judge. “For what is a man profited, if he gain the whole world, and lose his own soul? or what shall a man give in exchange for his soul ‡?” Hence the probability of being instrumental in saving one soul, ought to command our ac-

* Rev. vii. 9, 10. Isa. ix. 5. 2 Cor. vii. 5. † 2 Tim. ii. 16. ‡ Acts xxiv. 16. § 2 Cor. i. 12. || 1 Cor. iii. 7. ¶ 2 Tim. iv. 2. * Jam. v. 7. † Eccl. xi. 4, 5. ‡ Matt. xvi. 26.

tivity and perseverance, even when appearances are discouraging. Accordingly, let the submissive fortitude of Joab be cherished in our mind, "Be of good courage, and let us play the men for our people, and for the cities of our God; and let the Lord do what seemeth him good *." If we cannot cope with Joab, let not the heroines of Israel rank us with the timid Barak;—Deborah, from love to her nation, equally prepared for success, disappointment, or death, encounters her enemies, and returns victorious †. And Esther, in a case equally hopeless, deeply afflicted for the doom of her people, entered the presence of her consort, the Persian king, at the peril of her life, breathing as she moved, "If I perish, I perish ‡;" and her enterprize was crowned with deliverance and triumph. Are not all unconverted men under a penal sanction? Hence, are there not many of the nation of the redeemed involved in the common ruin? And hence, however obstinate the contest, and seemingly doubtful the issue, how shall we retire from battle, without trophies from sin and Satan? Victory is certain; for the Lord, mighty in battle, is our commander. "And I saw, and behold, a white horse; and he that sat on him had a bow, and a crown was given unto him, and he went forth conquering and to conquer §." In this spiritual conquest of the human heart by the gospel, the obstinacy with which sinners refuse to capitulate, renders their wounds so exquisitely painful, as exemplified in the Pentecost hearers, that sons of thunder, to attack and subdue, are not more necessary than those of consolation, to bind up and mollify ||.

Besides, the minds even of pious ministers are apt to be elated by success. Hence much of the good promoted by their means is wisely concealed from their eyes in time. We are more discernibly employed in finishing what others began. They had been doing the same to their forerunners, and our successors may be so employed respecting us. "I sent you to reap that whereon ye bestowed no labour: other men laboured, and ye are entered into their labours ¶." Thus the grand chain in the scheme of salvation is regularly unfolding, "that one generation shall praise the works of God to another, and shall declare his

* 2 Sam. x. 12. † Judg. iv. v. ‡ Esth. iv. 16. § Rev. vi. 2. || Mark iii. 17
Act. ii. 37. iv. 34. Isa. i. 6. ¶ John iv. 38.

mighty acts *.” Having the work finished, is incomparably more important than by whom, the instrument being merely a secondary consideration. The seed which we are now sowing, may lodge under the clod † during the residue of our days, but, after we go hence, the dew of salvation, and the genial rays of the Sun of righteousness, may cause it spring, so as to produce a plentiful harvest. “One soweth, and another reapeth.” When the conversion of some amongst whom we are now labouring is celebrated by benevolent angels, how melodiously will we accent the song. Their arrival in heaven shall ravish our eyes with delight. “Who hath begotten me these? and who hath brought up these? Behold, I was left alone, these, where have they been ‡? How anxiously have I prayed, and looked, and longed for seals of my ministry in yonder land of tears, but in vain. I now behold them; it sufficeth. They that sow in tears shall reap in joy §. And he that reapeth receiveth wages, and gathereth fruit unto life eternal: that both he that soweth and he that reapeth may rejoice together ¶.” Hence he that ploweth should plow in hope §.”

Our Lord, during his personal ministry, was not so successful, as some short-sighted mortals might have expected. No doubt, among other reasons, that his ministers when unsuccessful might not despond: while they may without arrogance adopt the manner in which he solaced himself, “Then I said, I have laboured in vain, and have spent my strength for nought and in vain, yet surely my judgment is with the Lord, and my work with my God *.” If sinners be not converted, the enmity and prejudice with which they reject the gospel must aggravate their guilt and punishment; but the retributive justice of God shall be magnified in such as despise, as the riches of his grace in such as embrace the gospel: while in either case his ministers will be precious in his estimation †. Hence, without due submission to the sovereignty of God, faithful ministers, under the perplexing circumstances of unsuccessfulness, can maintain neither comfort, fortitude, nor perseverance in preaching the gospel. Accordingly when Paul, who was daily afflicted for his impenitent

* Psal. cxlv. 4. † Joel i. 17. ‡ Isa. xlix. 21. § Psal. cxxvi. 5. ¶ John iv. 36.
§ 1 Cor. ix. 10. * Isa. xlix. 4. ‡ 2 Thess. i. 8—11. Isa. lv. 8—12. 2 Cor. ii. 15.

countrymen, considered their guilt in rejecting and crucifying Messiah, the catastrophe which should commence, their present dispersion, the few comparatively who believed, the many ages of judicial blindness which were to succeed, the myriads who must have eternally perished before they would embrace the gospel as a nation; no other basis but sovereignty could have supported his mind. "What then? Israel hath not obtained that which he seeketh for: but the election hath obtained, and the rest were blinded *." Hence, from love to Christ, to truth, and to souls, leaving consequences at the disposal of sovereignty, let us make a voluntary surrender of ourselves to the work of the ministry, according to the generous offer of the son of Amos; "Here am I, send me ||."

Lastly, We are to obviate what is merely circumstantial in the scruples arising from the final account which ministers are to render of their stewardship. This, indeed, will be the most solemn stage in our existence, and frequently is a subject of concern and terror to believers. ‡

* Rom. xi. 7. || Isa. vi. 8.

‡ The fears of the Lord's people, with regard to their final account, proceed, in general, more from uncertainty of being in a gracious state, than from the peculiar circumstances of their station. It is so with his ministers also. As sinners, we are to believe the gospel; as believers, we are qualified for the relative and moral duties of our station, consequently for the ministry: hence it is, according to the evidence of a saving change wrought in us by the agency of the word and Spirit of God, that we enjoy the consolation of grace, and engage ourselves in duties and hardships with unshaken firmness. Whereas in the absence of that evidence, the anticipation of many duties connected with our lot, awakes in our doubting minds alarming apprehensions of future woe. For though we may conform to the precept from a rational conviction of its moral sanction, yet nothing but a realizing enjoyment by faith of the grace exhibited in the promise, can render our obedience experimentally comfortable, and preserve in our hearts a satisfactory evidence that we are born again. But mistaking the principle on which this point should be decided, we entangle ourselves in erroneous perplexities. Why infer the graciousness of our state from the transient impulse of feelings? and not from the prevailing desire of our mind, and the leading features in our deportment? the criterion in which reason, scripture, and the thing itself mutually concur. Or why, under comfortable impressions, do we not finally decide the point? or why so sanguine respecting it when working in darkness? as upon our own principle we misimprove the season of frames. The reason is obvious. Our principle is false, so must our conclusion. For the object we pursue, cannot, but in the counterfeit of presumption, be ascertained in the process by which we conduct our inquiry. Because in the most elevated enjoyment, whether respecting our state, or other matters of exercise, we may be misled; and were feelings the criterion of our state, hypocrites, especially enthusiasts, having these occasionally as rapturously as genuine believers, might conclude that they were in a gracious state; which, no doubt, is one reason why they always deceive themselves, and so frequently impose upon the people of God.

Although there can be no true religion without experience, yet this experience must proceed from faith. For all the subordinate graces, in their different operations, must

But they shall be qualified to act their part with joy. This is the uniform tenor of the covenant of grace, according to the testimony of inspiration. Christ, being furnished with all mediatorial fitness; being responsible to the Father for the number, and holiness of the redeemed, has made suitable provision for every stage in their existence: which was mutually stipulated when in the counsel of peace they were predestinated to be conformed to his image*. To accomplish this, "Christ loved the church, and gave himself for it; that he might sanctify and cleanse it, with the washing of water by the word, That he might present it to himself, a glorious church, not having spot or wrinkle, or any such thing: but that it should be holy and without blemish†." At justification, this transforming work is begun. Being then made partakers of the

uniformly submit to the rational dictates of faith, hope, and love. 1 Cor. xiii. 13. The assurance of faith rests on the veracity of God in his word; Jam. ii. 23. 2 Tim. i. 12. that of our state, on the evidence that Christ dwells in us by the sanctifying agency of his Spirit; Col. i. 27. Gal. ii. 20. and experience, scripturally regulated, proceeds from both. Song v. 4, 5. vi. 12. Luke xxiv. 32. When we cannot perceive Christ in us, let us embrace salvation in the general offer of the gospel, as if hitherto strangers to the respective exercise of all the graces of the Spirit; for Christ unalterably abides faithful in his word. 2 Tim. ii. 13. After the disciples had been believers for years, Christ, the night he was betrayed, puts the question, "Do ye now believe?" John xvi. 31. Therefore, when we cannot discover the internal evidence of a saving change in our nature, let not the pride of self-humility impede our coming to Christ as unregenerate sinners. Instead of casting away our confidence, Heb. x. 35. instead of yielding to despair, Psal. lxxvii. 7, 8, 9. Isa. xlix. 14. let us imitate the conduct of Jonah, ii. 4. "Then, I said, I am cast out of thy sight; yet I will look again toward thy holy temple." Let us comply with the admonition of the Saviour of sinners, and the tender physician of them that are bruised; "Be not afraid, only believe." Mark v. 36.

But unbelief and spiritual darkness refuse instruction. When permitted to reign, what depredations they commit in our soul! Under their gloomy, but sanctimonious veil, how frequently does Satan, by his devices, 2 Cor. ii. 11. attempt to mislead our renewed nature. And in no stratagem, whatever, is he more successful, than by first confusing our mind that we cannot distinctly specify the cause of our grief, then diverting us from exercising reason and faith on the word of God, and lastly pointing our jaundiced eye to the inconsistencies in our conduct and spiritual exercise, and the apparent frown in the countenance of our heavenly Father. Do I not now speak to the familiar case and mistakes of many believers?

Therefore, respecting the day of judgment, how can sense or experience, without horror, anticipate all nature in dissolution, all intelligent worlds standing before the white throne, the Judge clothed in robes of visible Divinity, the sentence pronounced on the parties, the procession of the holy to felicity and of the unholy to misery? We can only have our ideas concerning these things regulated by faith; and then, instead of terror, they are replete with joy. Accordingly, thus faith our Lord to his drooping disciples, when he was predicting the catastrophe which was soon to befall the Jews, and the solemnities of the day of judgment. "When these things begin to come to pass, then look up, and lift up your heads; for your redemption draweth nigh." Matt. xxiv. Luke xxi.

* Isaiah xlii. 1—9. Ephesians i. 1—11. Col. ii. 9, 10. John i. 14, 16. Romans viii. 29. 1 Corinthians xv. 23—29. Hebrews ii. 13. 1 John iii. 2. Zech. vi. 13.

† Ephesians v. 25, 26, 27.

divine nature by the agency of the Spirit, the three persons in the Godhead reside in believers to preserve them unto salvation, and to fit them for the inheritance of the saints in light *. During preparation for that inheritance, whether the believing beggar, concealed in obscurity, or the conspicuous minister, “as thy day, so shall thy strength be; lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world †,” secure to the redeemed every necessary aid to render them faithful stewards. Christ, superintending the means by which his people are conformed to his image, will sanctify them more and more, “Till they all come in the unity of faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ ‡.

At death, we join the spirits of just men made perfect §; and at the resurrection, soul and body are reunited in triumph. “O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory? The sting of death is sin, the strength of sin is the law; but thanks be to God who giveth us the victory through Jesus Christ our Lord ||.” Now, the human nature of Christ on the great white throne, is the standard by which our perfection shall be decided. “We shall be like him, for we shall see him as he is.” Justice pronouncing us holy, and at the same time being conscious to ourselves of our conformity to the image of Christ, of which truth assembled worlds are also witnesses, we are qualified to balance accounts with joy, to contemplate with holy serenity every progressive step in the scene, and are admitted his assessors. “Do ye not know that the saints shall judge the world? Know ye not that we shall judge angels ¶?” Such shall be his and their glory, that, while they reflect glory on the Father and holy Ghost; while elect angels celebrate their relation to them, even devils and wicked men will behold them with envious astonishment. So speaks the demoniac to the sons of Scève; “Jesus I know, and Paul I know; but who are ye †*?” On that day, “Christ comes to be glorified in his saints, and to be admired in all them that believed ‡‡.” All, in their respective capacities and stations, shall be glorious. Believing ministers, being perfectly holy, which

* John xiv. 16—24. Ephesians ii. 22. Col. i. 12. † Peter i. 5. 2 Pet. i. 4. ‡ Deut. xxxiii. 25. Matthew xxviii. 20. † Ephesians iv. 13. § Hebrews xii. 23. || 1 Cor. xv. 55—58. ¶ 1 Corinthians vi. 2, 3. †* Acts xix. 5. ‡‡ 2 Thess. i. 10.

is the common privilege of all the redeemed, appear according to the integrity of the desire they had for doing good ; and those of them who have been most successful only in the collateral crown of the trophies which grace by their means redeemed from sin and Satan.

All the elect thus distinguished for holiness, and by the approbation of God, the judge of all, contemplate the unholy as victims of justice. Our sensibility, which, in time, had frequently transgressed the bounds of reason and religion, and had dictated to our sentiments and actions various and opposite extremes, is now in unison with, and regulated by the governing authority of a perfected understanding. Hence former relations exist only in memory, that we may have accurate conceptions of the procedure of God towards the just and the unjust. " For in the resurrection they neither marry nor are given in marriage, but are as the angels of God in heaven *." On this day, and henceforth, the holy husband or spouse, will no more at a throne of grace, nor in the endearments of expostulation and entreaty, weep for unbelieving partners or children ; nor yet faithful ministers any more in trembling and in tears implore sinners to embrace the Saviour : the day of mercy being expired, the election of grace sanctified, and triumph the prevailing enjoyment of the glorified bride of the lamb. Though thus triumphant, yet the benevolence of the redeemed is so pure, that they bear no natural enmity to any of the foes of God : which is evident from Abraham's reply to the rich man ||. For their hatred to sin, and the tenor of their disposition and conduct, is regulated by justice and the law of love, while an unvariable consciousness of being filled with all the fulness of God excites their sanctified gratitude to celebrate the Author of their salvation †.

Such are some of the revealed circumstances connected with the day of judgment ; but that the scene in due time shall actually exist, can now be realized by faith only ; by parity of reason, must not the fitness of the redeemed, consequently of believing ministers, as represented in scripture, for acting their part with joy, be apprehended by faith likewise ? Especially, as the former is to be found in the testimony of inspiration merely, whereas the mental circumstances of the latter, have been in a progressive

* Matt. xxii. 30.

|| Luke xvi. 25.

† Rev. v. 9.

accomplishment for near six thousand years, and, in some degree, daily realized and exemplified in the attainments and at the dissolution of believers. While believing sinners are conscientiously observant of all the duties of religion, while they are alternately exercised by hope and fear, while they are anxiously desirous of complete sanctification, while their graces are properly exercised, they exult in the persuasion, that there is an unalterable design towards them, and that their own exertions constitute no part of the efficient cause. The moving springs of this design, and the particular objects which it embraces, Jehovah has concealed in the counsel of the Trinity from our penetration, whilst in the abundance of his condescension he has given us a revelation of the communicable properties of that design, resembling a chain, by whose links our feeble minds are supported in contemplating it. In this design we have the clearest demonstration of infinite wisdom. To arrest our attention, and to reconcile us to the whole of the design, we have the links of the chain unfolded in peculiar language. "Whom he did foreknow he also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of his Son, that he might be the first born among many brethren. Moreover, whom he did predestinate, them he also called; and whom he called, them he also justified, and whom he justified, them he also glorified *." Every pledge that could be devised is granted to us in scripture, that we shall never be placed in any circumstances, without a parallel fitness. Nor is our fitness for any event whatever more largely described by inspiration, than that in which believers shall appear in the day of judgment. Had this promised fitness produced its intended effects upon our minds, we should always have abounded with increasing joy. Accordingly, when faith is in exercise, we hasten to the coming of the day of God. This is the light, respecting believers, in which the holy Ghost uniformly represents the subject. Hence, in the description of the dissolution of the world by Peter, which is so striking and moving, that, in reading of it, we apprehend ourselves contemplating the flames ascending in the midst of heaven, the elements melting with fervent heat, hearing the groans of an expiring world, these amazing

* Rom. viii. 29, 30.

and consolatory words invite our particular attention, that we may now believe, with what exulting joy we shall then behold the catastrophe; "Looking for and hastening unto the coming of the day of God *."

Who, then, can be more fitly qualified for the harvest of Christ, than those who have obtained believing views of such glorious truths?—who to proclaim the purity of the law and the evil of sin, than such as have heard the thunder of Sinai, and beheld the sword of justice plunged into the heart of Immanuel †?—who to sound alarm in the ears of sinners, than such as have known the terrors of the Lord ‡?—who to describe the realities of future woe, than such as have in miniature experienced the pains of hell §?—who to point out the city of refuge, than such, having fled into it, as enjoy strong consolation ||?—who to urge the doctrines of the cross, than such as have known their saving influence ¶?—who to mollify the wounds of a broken heart, than such, in like circumstances, as have been healed by Jesus, the balm of Gilead *?—who to direct amidst the conflicts of grace and depravity, than such as resemble the Shulamite ††?—who to unfold the exceeding great and precious promises, than such as, having embraced them, are animated by a good hope through grace §§?—who to represent the prospects of heavenly bliss, than such as by believing do enter into rest |||?—In a word, who can be more fitly qualified for the harvest of Christ, being apt to teach, possessing the knowledge of the truth, and prevaillingly inclined to engage in the work, than such as have tasted that he is altogether lovely, that he is able to save to the uttermost all who come unto God by him, and that all who reject his gospel must inevitably perish §†? I know not any. And, therefore, such views being experimentally acquired, in connection with a due sense of the difficulties we have suggested, admitting what is circumstantial in them to have been scripturally obviated, I proceed in the

THIRD place, to point out some considerations inseparably connected with propagating the gospel, which fur-

* 2 Pet. iii. 12.

† Exod. xix. Isa. liii. Zech. xiii. 7.

‡ 2 Cor. v. 11.

§ Psal. cxvi. 3.

|| Heb. vi. 18.

¶ 1 Cor. i. 18.

* Jerem. viii. 22.

2 Cor. i. 4.

Song vi. 13.

Rom. vii. 23.

Gal. v. 17.

§§ 2 Theff. ii.

16. 3 Pet. i. 4.

||| Heb. iv. 3.

§† Song v. 16

Heb. vii. 25.

Mark xvi. 16.

nish powerful motives to enforce the exhortation, "Pray ye the Lord of the harvest, that he would thrust out labourers into his harvest." *The greatness of the harvest is employed by our Lord to enforce the exhortation. "The harvest truly is great,"* founding from his lips, ought to awake us to activity. To command an extensive prospect, we take a natural and moral survey of the terraqueous globe. Unbounded view! We behold a world, once all paradisaical, converted, by the transgression of man, to a barren wilderness; while the moral arrangement of things exhibits a more affecting transition: the state, devotion and practice of the human race, being wholly reversed from their original. (See Gen. iii. 17, 18, 19. Gal. iii. 10. Eph. ii. 1. Isa. xlv. 9—21. Rom. i. 18—32. viii. 5—9.) We behold a multitude of mortals, immortals, though governed by invisible superintendency for unalterable purposes, who exhibit a chaos of spirits, unconcerned, unconscious of any fixed design, resembling the dance of ungoverned atoms moving at random. In this confusion, some more conspicuous object arrests our pensive eye. We behold the Otaheitan offering human sacrifices; the New Zealander first destroying and then devouring his species; the Indian, ascending the funeral pile of a deceased friend, attempts to exult in the flames. Following such deluded beings to the eternal world, we behold their spirits entering the abodes of the damned*, never apprehending their guilt and danger, till everlasting burnings have consumed the vail under which their delusion was concealed. And, of the heathen especially, in that situation, what multitudes may be rushing into a future world as the words are dropping from my lips! "Now must our eyes affect our hearts†." In trembling astonishment, taking up a bitter lamentation over the mighty ruin, we exclaim, Is there any remedy provided, by which such melancholy consequences may in future be avoided? Yes: The Scripture, by which we apprehend the misery, proclaims the compassionate address of the Father to his dear Son: "It is a light thing that thou shouldest be my servant, to raise up the tribes of Jacob, and to restore the preserved of Israel: I will also give thee for a light to the Gentiles, that thou mayest be

* Proverbs xxix. 18. Romans ii. 12.

† Lamentations iii. 51.

my salvation to the ends of the earth †." Why doth this salvation tarry? Our Lord replies,

"*The labourers are few.*" Dividing the inhabited world into thirty parts, we find that nineteen parts are possessed by blind and gross idolaters; six parts by Jews, Turks, and Saracens; two parts by those of the Greek church; and three parts by Papists and Protestants. Thus, taking the profession of Christianity on the largest scale, it bears no greater proportion to our deluded fellow creatures, than five to twenty-five. Of that proportion, whether Grecian, Popish, or Protestant, how few are in holy orders. From that few, deduct hirelings, or false teachers,—and charity, which thinketh no evil, will positively declare faithful labourers few indeed. Hence, before a sufficient number can be obtained, not only believers already in the ministry, and such of them as are preparing for orders, should hasten, as circumstances permit, to dispose of themselves in stations offering the most extensive usefulness, but others of the Lord's people must also engage. How many believers among the learned, and those in elevated stations, are qualified to preach the gospel. Let them take orders. Nor do we consider this demand subversive of dignity *. For it is by preaching the gospel that the events which meliorate the universe, felicitate human nature, destroy the works of the devil,

* Isaiah xlix. 6.

† The preaching of the gospel is the most glorious work in which man can engage on earth. For the scheme of salvation, which the gospel unfolds, is unparalleled, whether we consider the Trinity engaged in it, the principles on which it is conducted, or the object to be obtained by it. Viewing the Trinity engaged, we behold the Father sustaining the character of supreme Deity, conducting the reins of universal government; the Son becoming man, debtor and servant; and the Spirit becoming servant of both. While we are lost in astonishment, that, though thus arranged according to official subordination, the supreme Deity of any is not for a moment suspended. Viewing this scheme upon the principles by which it is conducted, it is also unparalleled. The Father actuated by self-moving love, the Son becomes an offering for sin, and the Spirit applies the atonement by means of doctrines which are sovereign, rational, sublime, and obviously calculated to reflect honour on Deity, and promote the salvation of believing sinners. But the object to be obtained by this scheme renders it unparalleled also. By the scheme of redemption, justice is satisfied, and sinners restored to favour; justice concurs, that believing sinners shall be made holy now, and happy hereafter. In the heavenly world, justice from the supreme throne, and the redeemed from their mansions of bliss, will contemplate each other with delight, while the Lamb forms the centre of union, in whom they ever embrace with mutual complacency. Is it, then, subversive of dignity to solicit the Lord's people, from the most elevated stations in the world, to promulgate the tidings which unfold a scheme containing such an assemblage of unparalleled wonders?

and adorn heaven with redeeming lustre, shall be accomplished.

Do we desire clement and fruitful seasons? Let us propagate the gospel; “And the wilderness and the solitary place shall be glad for them; and the desert shall rejoice, and blossom as the rose. It shall blossom abundantly, and rejoice even with joy and singing; the glory of Lebanon shall be given unto it, the excellency of Carmel and Sharon: they shall see the glory of the Lord, and the excellency of our God *.” Do we desire docility, and harmony among the brute creatures? Let us propagate the gospel; “The wolf also shall dwell with the lamb, and the leopard shall lie down with the kid; and the calf, and the young lion, and the fatling together, and a little child shall lead them. And the sucking child shall play on the hole of the asp, and the weaned child shall put his hand on the cockatrice den. They shall not hurt nor destroy in all my holy mountain: for the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the Lord, as the waters cover the sea †.” Do we desire to see the influence of Antichrist abolished? Let us propagate the gospel, the mean appointed for accomplishing that event. 2 Thess. ii. 8—13. Do we desire political struggles, whose parent is ambition, and whose offspring is bloodshed and murder, to cease? Let us propagate the gospel; “For it shall come to pass in the last days, that the mountain of the Lord’s house shall be established on the top of the mountains, and shall be exalted above the hills; and all nations shall flow unto it. And they shall beat their swords into plowshares, and their spears into pruning-hooks: nation shall not lift up sword against nation: neither shall they learn war any more §.” Do we desire to see the circles of fashion honouring God by their persons and wealth? Let us propagate the gospel; “For in that day shall there be upon the bells of the horses, HOLINESS UNTO THE LORD; and the pots in the Lord’s house shall be like the bowls before the altar. Yea, every pot in Jerusalem, and in Judah, shall be holiness unto the Lord of hosts §.” Do we desire to see the line of distinction between Church and State conscientiously observed? Let us propagate the gospel; “And kings shall be thy nursing fathers, and their queens thy nursing

* Isaiah xxxv. 1, 2. † Isaiah xi. 6—10. ‡ Isaiah ii. 2, 4. § Zech. xiv. 20, 21.

mothers*.” Do we desire to see the Jews embracing Messiah, and laying aside the disputes among their tribes? Let us who are believing Gentiles propagate the gospel with judgment, circumspection and zeal; “I say then, have they stumbled that they should fall? God forbid: but rather, through their fall, salvation is come to the Gentiles, to provoke them to jealousy † a.” “And he shall set up an ensign for the nations, and shall assemble the outcasts of Israel, and gather together the dispersed of Judah, from the four corners of the earth; the envy also of Ephraim shall depart, and the adversaries of Judah shall be cut off: Ephraim shall not envy Judah, and Judah shall not vex Ephraim †.” Do we desire to see Jews and Gentiles serving God in the unity of the Spirit? Let us propagate the gospel; “And the Lord shall be king over all the earth; in that day shall there be one Lord; and his name one ||.” Do we desire increase of knowledge? Let us propagate the gospel; “Many shall run to and fro, and knowledge shall be increased §.” Do we desire to see cordiality among Christ’s ministers? Let us propagate the gospel; “Thy watchmen shall lift up the voice, with the voice together shall they sing: for they shall see eye to eye, when the Lord shall bring again Zion ¶.” Do we desire to see pure discipline restored and maintained in the Churches of Christ? Let us propagate the gospel; “In that day there shall be no more the Canaanite in the house of the Lord of hosts *†.” Do we desire health and longevity? Let us propagate the gospel; “The inhabitant shall not say, I am sick—There shall be no more an infant of days, nor an old man that hath not filled his days †† b.” Do we desire to see the kingdom of darkness falling to the ground by the conversion of sinners? Let us propagate the gospel, that we may be instrumental, “To open their eyes, and turn them from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan to God ||§.” Do we desire to see men

* Isaiah xlix. 23. † Romans xi. 11. † Isaiah xi. 12, 13. || Zech. xiv. 9.
§ Daniel xii. 4. Isaiah xxx. 26. ¶ Isaiah lii. 8. *† Zech. xiv. 21. †† Isaiah xxxiii.
24. lxx. 20. ||§ Acts xxvi. 18.

a The conversion of the Jews, as represented in prophecy, will likely be attended with great distress, inflicted by the different Powers, especially the Papal, among whom they are now dispersed.

b Several of the passages quoted above are partly figurative; most of them refer to the Jews after embracing Jesus of Nazareth as the true Messiah; and all of them; I apprehend, allude to the Millennial glory of the church.

restored to the image of God? Let us exhibit Christ to their understandings and consciences, having in our own case experienced the transforming influence of beholding him in the gospel mirror; "For we all, with open face, beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image, from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord *." Do we desire to contribute to the joy of angels? Let us propagate the gospel; "For there is joy in the presence of the angels of God, over one sinner that repenteth †." Do we desire to see Christ's Mediatorial glory advanced, heaven planted with redeemed inhabitants, and hear the song of grace shouting around the throne? Let us propagate the gospel; "And they sung a new song, saying, Thou art worthy to take the book, and to open the seals thereof; for thou wast slain, and hast redeemed us to God by thy blood, out of every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation ‡." Compared with being employed in accomplishing such glorious events, what is the palm of the victorious warrior, what the renown of the gallant admiral, what the honours conferred on men of Science, what the applause of Senatorial oratory, what the supreme command in political arrangements, what the sway of empire, what the riches of the world ||? How are the empty, bewitching honours of

* 2 Corinthians iii. 18. † Luke xv. 20. ‡ Revelation v. 9.

|| The language of inspiration is peculiarly grand when representing the messengers of peace. "How beautiful upon the mountains are the feet of him that bringeth good tidings, that publisheth peace, that bringeth good tidings of good, that publisheth salvation, that saith unto Zion, thy God reigneth." Isaiah lii. 7. Nor is this like the perishing titles among men. For in propagating the gospel, we promote our own glory. "They that be wise shall shine as the brightness of the firmament, and they that turn many to righteousness as the stars for ever and ever." Daniel xii. 3. (See Phil. iv. 1. 1 Thessalonians ii. 19, 20.) Hence, the dignity of the gospel dispensation, candidly viewed, must, in point of self-importance, level human distinctions to the dust. "For ye know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that though he was rich, yet for our sakes he became poor, that we through his poverty might be rich." 2 Cor. viii. 9. We produce companions to our pious, learned, and elevated friends. Did not Moses refuse being called the son of Pharaoh's daughter, and, preferring the very reproach of Christ, despise the riches of Egypt? Hebrews xi. Did not the princes of Judah travel from place to place teaching the law? 2 Chronicles xviii. Was not king Solomon a preacher? We refer you to Ecclesiastes. Did not Saul of Tarsus renounce his most flattering prospects of temporal preferment for the cross of Christ? Phil. iii. Come forth, then, ye pious, and learned, and ye also in elevated stations, imitate this noble company, who are now inheriting the promises. Had they to begin their course anew, they would still continue, as the noblest employment, to declare the riches of Christ. Say not, that preaching the gospel is beneath the dignity of your rank; nor yet, that thus we should soon overcrowd the vineyard. "Would God that all the Lord's people were prophets." Numbers xi. 29. Nor can such an apology be sustained till all the world have heard the gospel; while treasures shall be supplied. "For the silver is mine, and the gold is mine, saith the Lord of Hosts." Hag. ii. 8. Neither,

time, annihilated at the presence of the noble realities of eternity ! But the

Signs of the times put forth their voice to enforce the exhortation in the text. We hear of wars and tribulations. The potsherds of the earth are striving together; yet, imitating the weeping prophet, " O thou sword of the Lord, how long shall it be ere thou be quiet? put up thyself into thy scabbard, rest and be still *;" we may confidently adopt, " Surely the wrath of man shall praise thee: the remainder of wrath shalt thou restrain †." Does Infidelity, with her immoral retinue, elevate her imperious crest? A ground of sincere lamentation indeed. But while we lament, let us not despond. For Christ is a rock, and the gates of hell cannot prevail against his church ‡. Infidelity, like the ocean, may roar, and foam, but, disappointed, must retire at his rebuke. " Hitherto shalt thou come, and no farther: and here shall thy proud waves be stayed ||." Hence, while contending banners are drenched in blood, while the prolific womb of Infidelity brings forth a numerous progeny, which we sincerely deplore, still, as these are among the predicted signs of the last days, we would rejoice, like Habakkuk, upon absolute principles, that " The testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy §."

Turning to the page of prophecy, we anxiously inquire, Is the sixth trumpet near the close? are the witnesses slain and risen? is the tenth part of the city, the Pope's temporal power, fallen? is the expiration of the second wo, the dissolution of the Ottoman empire, at hand? is the seventh trumpet about to sound? or is the commencement of the

virtually, say, " The time is not come, the time that the Lord's house shall be built." " For the stone crieth out of the wall, and the beam out of the timber, chiding our delays." Hag. i. 2. Hab. ii. 11. Whilst the human race, once a glorious temple, are in ruins, can any of the Lord's people, of whatever station, withhold their personal assistance? Time is flying, and sinners are perishing around us, and in the heathen world. Were it prescribed to elect angels, and the believing daughters of Adam to preach the gospel, Christ, humanly speaking, should not have been so straitened for labourers. Hence, with what astonishment and regret must they behold our supineness. Since the preaching of the gospel is devolved, exclusively, on the believing sons of Adam, with what zeal and readiness should we engage and persevere. The desire in many places for hearing the gospel should animate us to a zealous activity. " Behold I say unto you, Lift up your eyes, and look on the fields; for they are white already to harvest." John iv. 35.

* Jeremi. xlvii. 6. † Psalms lxxvi. 10. ‡ Matthew xvi. 18. || Job xxxviii. 11.

§ Hab. iii. 17, 18, 19. Revelation xix. 10.

angel flying in the midst of heaven, the Christian church, intimated by the efforts making for propagating the gospel? is the cordiality, begun of late among believers of different denominations, a presage that the woman, the church, is returning from her wilderness? Then shall the seven angels, gospel ministers, with the last plagues, against Antichrist, in their vials, come in pure garments, out of the temple to expel the Gentiles, the votaries of Rome papal, from the outer court; then, true believers shall be endowed with higher degrees of spiritual knowledge and joy, which is meant by the temple being opened, and the Ark of the testimony seen; then, the delusions of the man of sin, by the pouring out of the vials, shall be detected and reprobated; then Rome, the seat of the beast, shall be destroyed; then, the Jews, the kings of the east, shall be converted; then, the battle of Armageddon, which destroys the son of perdition, shall successfully be fought, as supposed, in Judea, by the converted Jews; then, Satan shall be bound a thousand years; then, peace shall reign over the world, that mankind may be serenely prepared for the Millennial glory of the church, exhibited in a vision to John in Patmos, by a captivating and splendid representation. "And I, John, saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down from God out of heaven, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband*." (See the last twelve chapters of the Révelation.) To accelerate this grand era of the church, one dispensation marches hard upon the heels of another. Hence we behold Prophecy travailing as in mighty throes, to exhibit to open view the mysteries concealed in her womb for ages; while the Lord's people, by prayer, by liberality, by co-operation, by Missionary efforts, lend their assistance. Nor are partial failures to intimidate from activity and perseverance.

Reflect with serious candour, you who are regardless of God's glory, and man's felicity. Dare you place your indifference, contempt, or opposition, in the way of propagating the gospel? God is doing terrible things among the nations. Let sinners in Zion be afraid. Shall we provoke him to sweep us from the earth by the blossom of destruction? What havock has his justice already made

* Revelation xxi. 2.

among nations, and individuals, who have opposed the manifestations of his glory in promoting the salvation of men; let the history of the church, and of the world, since the death of the first-born in Egypt, to our own day, record and attest. Having condignly chastised all who had ever resisted him, his strength is not yet exhausted. He acts from uncreated power, according to the dictates of justice. "His hand is stretched out still †." If it fall upon us in vengeance, we shall find, "That wo is to him who striveth with his maker †." From bitter experience, we shall have an eternity, "To know the power of his anger §." Hence, let us examine ourselves, whether any part of our conduct respecting the spread of the gospel expose us to the anathemas of inspiration. "Curse ye Meroz, (said the angel of the Lord) curse ye bitterly the inhabitants thereof, because they came not to the help of the Lord, to the help of the Lord against the mighty †."

† Isaiah v. 25. Isaiah xlv. 9. § Psalms xc. 11. † Judges v. 23.

b Shall they who profess to be ministers of the gospel, individually or collectively, employ any means to oppose and counteract the benevolent efforts of those who labour indefatigably to publish the blessed name of Jesus of Nazareth, whether at home or abroad? Such persons ought to reflect upon the fearful doom of a chief governor in the house of the Lord; when he smote Jeremiah, and put him in the stocks. "The Lord," saith the inspired prophet, "hath not called thy name Pashur, but Magor-missabib. For behold, saith the Lord, I will make thee a terror to thyself, and to all thy friends." Jeremiah xx. Is not that charity which thinketh no evil, staggered, when we behold those, who, upon other occasions, express great zeal for the cause of Christ, joining issue, and co-operating with the measures which the mere men of this world employ, when they plot against the Lord and his Anointed? Would not the spirit of John the Baptist, and that of the holy Apostle Paul, be much more becoming their professions and their office? If Christ increase, if the gospel of God's grace be preached, what matters it by whom, when or where, or after what manner? Or why should the gospel, if it be even preached out of envy, add affliction to our bonds? John iii. 25. to the end. Philippians i. 15—19. If the sheep are brought into the sheep-fold, if the gospel harvest is gathered, let us join the church triumphant with our feeble voices on earth, while they in heaven, in louder accents and in higher strains, rejoice in the presence of their Father over every sinner that repenteth. Love to Jesus, and to immortal souls, produces this benevolent and catholic disposition. Let those, therefore, who cherish contrary sentiments, consider what was said to the sons of Eli, who ate of the fat of the sacrifice, and yet kicked at the sacrifice of the Lord, and at the offering which he commanded in his habitation. "Them that honour me, I will honour; and they that despise me, shall be lightly esteemed." 1 Sam. ii. 29, 30.

It has often been matter of surprise to many of the children of God, who were unacquainted with the general maxims of ecclesiastical policy, and who have had little opportunity of observing the uniform effect which they have upon the minds of even pious men; upon what principle, either expressly laid down or implied in the holy scriptures, the conduct of many who preach the gospel can be accounted for. While they refuse their pulpits to those whom they scruple not to call, and even esteem as the Lord's people; they most cheerfully admit those whom they not only suspect, but know, and in their conversation frequently lament, as open opposers of the freeness of the grace of God. It would be impossible to state in a note the steps by which this partial and narrow, and contracted spirit, has so much obtained in Scotland. When that eminent servant of God, Mr. George Whitefield, was the mean of rendering

Should we neither love nor obey Christ, and should we, instead of assisting, combine our strength in opposing his

such important services to the church of Christ in this country, those whose duty it was to strengthen his hands, and to lend every assistance in their power to second his endeavours, gave all the opposition they could to prevent him from publishing the glad tidings of salvation to perishing sinners. The opposition was not confined to our Establishment. Those who had dissented from the national church, were as zealous, and, certainly, more uncharitable, and harsh in the terms which they applied to him. Does any christian view the conduct of these bodies of men in any other light, than as parallel to that of the disciples, when they wished that our Lord would command fire to come down from heaven and consume the *Samaritans*? The rebuke which he gave them is very applicable to our present subject; "Ye know not what manner of spirit ye are of." Luke ix. 54. Upon another occasion they objected against one who cast out devils in the name of Jesus, because he followed not them: "there is no man which shall do a miracle in my name that can lightly speak evil of me." Mark ix. 38—43. It deserves here to be noted, that Mr. Whitefield was the first who attempted to set aside those prejudices which the greater number of pious people in Scotland had fostered against Episcopacy, and an Episcopal Clergyman; and boldly to avow, that such petty distinctions deserve to be despised by all the truly zealous publishers of the doctrine of grace. The liberality of our times is certainly more free from the shackles of bigotry, than those to which we now refer; but it is surely a very uncommon circumstance, that our established presbyterian church should refuse their pulpits to those who are members of the same church with *Him*, without whom, either in person or by his Representative, they cannot hold the chief ecclesiastical Court of the Nation! It may be worthy of remark, that the church of England, high as her notions are with regard to the priesthood, does not treat either a Lutheran or a Papist, in the harsh manner that some late decisions of that court treat all, without exception, who differ from them. Those *circa sacra*, who first planned the late strange proceedings, will have some difficulty to reconcile their present conduct with their former ecclesiastical constitution, or with that loyalty and attachment to his Majesty they generally profess. How strange, then, must it sound in the ears of every Englishman, in the ears of many in Scotland, in the ears of every candid and thinking person, what many of those men are not shy in declaring, that all those who differ from them in church politics, are disaffected to the *State*!

The attention of the religious world has been much directed of late, to the subject of *lay preaching*. It must have been observed by the intelligent reader, that we have studiously avoided the discussion of this question. There can be no harm, however, in observing, that we have in general a pardonable vanity in quoting the authority of those *laymen*, who have bestowed some attention upon the scriptures, and have rendered eminent service to the church. Many of these men have been the greatest statesmen and philosophers the world hath produced; for example, Grotius, Pascal, Boyle, Newton, Locke, Addison, President Forbes, West, Lyttelton, and Wilberforce. We never hesitate to quote what these men have written; and as the opinions of Clergymen are supposed by the world to be influenced by the interest they have in keeping up the peculiarities of the gospel, it is not unfrequent, that reference is made to these illustrious characters. But from the spirit which seems to prevail at present, if the same men were now to preach what they have printed, and the difference is much less than is generally imagined, there are many, who have not the one half of their scripture knowledge, nor of their ability to communicate what they know, who would anathematize their persons, their writings, and their conduct. Shall we act in such a manner, as to give occasion to the candid and the observing to conclude, that we are better pleased that our fellow creatures should live under the ministry of those who are enemies to the cross of Christ, and go to hell blindfolded, than that the glad tidings of great joy should be published by *laymen*? When we lay our hand upon our *heart*, in the presence of the Searcher of hearts, can we, dare we say, that our zeal arises from a pure regard for the truth? or is it not to be feared, that it proceeds from the same contracted and impolitic principle, upon which all *Incorporations* act? A most striking exemplification of what we here allude to is recorded in the nineteenth chapter of the Acts of the Apostles, in the case of Demetrius, who, upon a certain occasion, thought the craft in danger! Is this christian benevolence?

gospel, he will have admirers who will deem it their honour and felicity to be employed in his service. "For I say unto you, that God is able of these stones to raise up children to Abraham *." But the concurring voice of

Inspiration inforces the exhortation in the text. Being commanded to pray, "Thy kingdom come §," an indisputable sanction is attached to the duty prescribed. "That the Father hath given the heathen as a Mediatorial inheritance to his Son ¶," that Christ, upon his resurrection, was invested with all power in heaven and in earth †; that on his glorification he commenced the conquest ‡; that he is conquering still †*; that his gospel shall be universal ||; and that he will be present with his ministers in all ages to the end of time *||; we are furnished with every thing necessary to guide our understanding, strengthen our faith, animate our hope, command our obedience, and excite in us indefatigable perseverance in propagating the gospel. Hence, those who are deaf to the voice of Moses, and the prophets, would despise the exhortation in the text, "Should one rise from the dead ¶*."

Having thus suggested some apparent difficulties which may intimidate many believers from preaching the gospel; endeavoured scripturally to obviate what is merely circumstantial in those difficulties; and pointed out some important circumstances inseparably connected with propagating the gospel, which furnish powerful motives to enforce the exhortation;—It now only remains that we make a few observations by way of improvement.

We are taught from this passage, that Christ is peculiarly interested in propagating the gospel. For, while his love to sinners brought him to our world; while under the influence of that love he bled, groaned, and died; dur-

Or are we not led to adopt the language of the Patriarch, when addressing two of his own sons, whom he tenderly loved? "O my soul, come not thou into their secret; unto their assembly, mine honour, be not thou united." Gen. xlix. 6. Reader, if these sentiments do not correspond with yours, we refer you to the candid and sensible opinion of Gamaliel, a zealous Pharisee, and a learned doctor of the law, who recommended patience and forbearance to the Jewish Sanhedrim, notwithstanding that the preaching of the apostles struck at the very foundation of the religious principles which he professed—at a law originally given by God, and which had been countenanced by him for ages. Acts v. 33—41.

* Matt. iii. 9. § Matt. vi. 10. ¶ Psal. ii. 8. † Matt. xxviii. 18. ‡ Acts ii. †* Rev. vi. 2. || Matt. xxiv. 14. *|| Matt. xxviii. 20. ¶* Luke xvi. 31.

ing his personal ministry he preached the gospel with indefatigable zeal. He enjoined his disciples to imitate his example. "While you preach, earnestly pray for more labourers." And in your itinerancy, while you are civil to all, that you may redeem time, "Salute no man by the way." "Let fervent zeal and activity guard you against neglecting opportunities of doing good. See how the ungodly, being unconcerned for eternity, by their fashionable vanities are deliberate murderers of time." "Be not conformed to this world, whose fashion passeth away *." "For I, your Lord and employer, know the value of time, of souls, and of your office and enterprize."

It is Christ's prerogative, "To thrust out labourers into his harvest." Who is the mortal that usurps the prerogative of the King of Kings? Hence we, who are in the ministry, should examine the principles and means by which we have been introduced into the vineyard. "What dost thou here, Elijah?" is an important question †. Is there a rational, a religious, and filial necessity, put upon us by the providence of God, the operation of his grace, and the prevailing inclination of our own minds, that with our temporal and spiritual enjoyments there is mingled a sensible wo if we preach not the gospel ‡? Then, whether our talents and opportunities be few or many, occupying with prudent zeal, we will manifest in our conduct a fixed resolution to promote the interest of pure and undefiled religion. To be labourers together with God is most honourable ||. But while a pure ministry is the greatest blessing; there cannot be a greater curse than a corrupt. Hence, dogs, foxes and wolves, are introduced in scripture to represent the greedy, the cunning, the destructive hireling §. Are there any hirelings within these walls? To obtain pardon for your original, actual, but especially your official transgression, fly to the blood of sprinkling, which, hitherto, you have abused and despised. Or are you determined to sink eternally in the blackness of darkness? under the guilt of a murdered Saviour, murdered truths, and murdered souls of men! Treat not this warning with derision, neither

* Rom. xii. 2. 1 Cor. vii. 31. † 1 Kings xix. 9. ‡ 1 Cor. ix. 16. || 1 Cor. iii. 9.
§ Isa. lvi. 10, 11, 12. Ezek. xiii. 3, 4. Matt. vii. 15.

deem the speaker dictatorially arrogant : for we are mutually concerned. Perhaps there is not a man out of hell, whose case is more desperate than an unconverted minister. Rushing into the harvest without being engaged by Christ, he insults the Godhead, and grieves the generation of the righteous ; elated by his learning, and the dignity which his office attaches to his person, it must be a very uncommon stretch of sovereign grace which pardons and transforms to the image of Jesus such a monster of iniquity. Hence, of the most flagitious sinners, the conversion of a carnal minister, because rare, is the greatest wonder. Therefore, let the Lord's children in the ministry, and of whatever denomination before me, understand what these words mean ; " Lay hand suddenly on no man, neither be partaker of other mens sins ; keep thyself pure *." " I speak as to wise men, judge ye what I say †."

For the ministry is solemn, perilous, and arduous ; and hence many of those fittest for it, must frequently be thrust out into it. It is compared to the toil of harvest. The fruits of the earth must be taken in season, else they perish ; so with the souls of men. Hence, whatever part of our function we are executing, as the next interview we have with immortal souls may be in eternity, with what fidelity should we act ! How faithful and laborious were the prophets, our Lord, and his apostles †. Hence the admonition, " Meditate upon these things, give thyself wholly to them ; that thy profiting may appear to all. Take heed unto thyself, and unto thy doctrine ; continue in them : for in doing this thou shalt both save thyself and them that hear thee—Preach the word ; be instant in season, and out of season ; reprove, rebuke, exhort with all long-suffering and doctrine ||." But as there may be some in the ministry who are laborious, respectable, and useful, as Judas may be supposed to have been, and yet strangers to saving grace ; as we may be ready to deceive ourselves by ascribing to personal godliness the strength and fervour we enjoy in official duties ; lest in the end we prove reprobate, how necessary to copy the jealous circumspec-

* 1 Tim. v. 22. † 1 Cor. x. 15. ‡ 2 Chron. xxxvi. 15. Isa. li. 9. lii. 1. John ix. 4. Gal. iv. 19. || 1 Tim. iv. 15, 16. 2 Tim. iv. 2.

tion which Paul uniformly exercised toward himself! "But I keep under my body, and bring it into subjection: lest that by any means, when I have preached to others, I myself should be a cast-away *."

But Gospel hearers, the great harvest, are concerned in the commission to the Seventy disciples. Are we all true believers? Then we love God, his word, his people; and, being zealous of good works, we hate sin, and to get rid of its remaining influence, "As new born babes we desire the sincere milk of the word †." Blessed are the people who are in such a case,—who are thus exercised. Or are we regardless how we apprehend truth, and what ministry we attend? sure we are yet in our sins. Nor will it justify us in the day of the Lord, while we have the scriptures, that a blind guide has led us astray ‡: while perishing under a faithful ministry will subject us to more severe punishment than that sustained by the inhabitants of Sodom and Gomorrah; who this moment are in everlasting burnings §. Read the chapter of which our text is a part; read the tenth and eleventh of Matthew; hear the lips of Jesus, which never exaggerated, describing the tremendous guilt and punishment of gospel despisers. Then ye who resemble the perishing harvest, hearken to our words: lay them to heart: we may never address you again, may never see you, till we meet you before the great white throne, either in the image of the Divine Judge, or arrived, in sin, at perfect conformity to your father the devil. You may take up the lamentation of the ancient church, "The harvest is past, the summer is ended, and we are not saved ||." Are there some of you, in grey hairs, about entering into the eternal world in a state of unregeneracy, and under the guilt of a despised gospel? Will you be so dishonouring to the Godhead, and cruel to yourselves? Or will the young extend their contempt of the gospel, till they have consumed the prime of life in the service of sin? "Beware, therefore, lest that come upon you, which is spoken of in the prophets, Behold, ye despisers, and wonder, and perish ¶." Look and cry to Jesus Christ, peradventure he may yet be gracious,

* 1 Cor. ix. 27.

† 1 Pet. ii. 2, 3.

‡ Ezek. xxxiii. 6.

§ Jude 7.

|| Jerem. viii. 20.

¶ Acts xiii. 40, 41.

notwithstanding your long contempt of his atonement. We assure you he waits to be gracious ; and, therefore, whilst he is this moment, as amidst the golden candlesticks, walking amongst us, with his eyes as a flame of fire beholding the most secret actings of our mind toward him, we articulate in your hearing the message with which we are intrusted. “ I, Jesus, have sent mine angel, to testify unto you these things in the churches ; I am the root and the offspring of David, and the bright and morning star. And the Spirit and the bride say, Come. And let him that heareth say, Come. And let him that is athirst, Come. And whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely *.” That such gracious tidings may be rendered acceptable to your soul, may He apply to your case, with a saving energy, the pointed address by which, in the days of his flesh, he arrested the mind of an amiable and learned Jew. “ Verily, verily, I say unto thee, except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God †.”

To conclude : How should the Lord’s people, of whatever denomination, unite their exertions in spreading the gospel ? There is no subject for disputation involved in our commission ; neither are we called to harangue upon politics, nor to undertake the civil conquest of kingdoms. “ My kingdom is not of this world ‡.” To plant in every clime the olive branch of the Cross, on whose leaves may be read, “ Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, and good-will to men ||,” is a more noble employment ; to be actuated by the doctrines taught beneath its shade, renders us good men, loyal subjects, and good citizens. Nor can we succeed in this important work, without cherishing a spiritual and lively sense of the doctrines of the cross in our own hearts. For the more we incorporate vital religion with our views and enterprizes, our sympathy for perishing sinners becomes more feelingly extensive, and our zeal in affording them assistance more intrepid and persevering. Observing unconverted sinners, in our families, congregations, cities, or kingdom, how deeply must we be affected ! Are they not every moment in danger of everlasting burnings ? Having, by

* Rev. xxii. 16, 17.

† John iii. 3.

‡ John xviii. 36.

|| Luke ii. 14.

converting grace, escaped the conflagration ourselves, must we not be anxious to make known to them the means of salvation? Ignorant of their danger, we should be excited to more activity in their behalf? They may treat our concern for them with derision, and charge us with unnecessary officiousness. Instigated, by natural enmity, and the devices of Satan, against God and their best interests, they exhibit to our view an affecting portraiture of what we have once been. So speaks Paul, "For we ourselves also were sometimes foolish, disobedient, deceived, serving divers lusts and pleasures, living in malice and envy, hateful, and hating one another*." Who made us differ? But for the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the holy Ghost, we should ever have continued hateful and hating one another. We, therefore, cheerfully lay our account with reproach, and persecution, even from the very sinners we would anxiously pluck as brands from the burning. Once the truth engages their mind, they will see, and think, and act otherwise. When we behold them in glory, we shall possess and exchange mutual gratitude and delight for what the Lord hath wrought.

This sympathetic activity for perishing sinners around us, will naturally lead to commiserate the heathen. When, notwithstanding the advantages we enjoy, error and vice are so prevalent at home, what shall become of the regions of paganism? Being transgressors of the holy law, subject to miseries of body and mind in the present world, strangers to the origin of sin, to the scheme of redemption, to the consolations of the gospel, to the realities beyond the grave; what unexpected terror must seize them when encircled by flames prepared for the devil and his angels! "Where there is no vision, the people perish†." "For as many as have sinned without law, shall also perish without law‡." Yet there is hope in Israel respecting the heathen. For Christ is a light to lighten the Gentiles||. Their present situation pleads at our bar as with the thrilling cry of a perishing man; "Come over and help us§." While they cry from danger, Christ, from compassion, commands us, "Preach the gospel to every creature¶." Then, can we resist the love and command of Jesus? Can

* Tit. iii. 3, 4, 5. I Cor. iv. 7. † Prov. xxix. 18. ‡ Rom. ii. 12. || Luke ii. 32. § Acts xvi. 19. ¶ Mark xvi. 15.

our bowels unmoved stare upon the heathen rushing on eternal woe? Or are we void of gratitude? God commits the propagation of the gospel to his people, bestows upon them gifts and graces for the task, preserves the world in existence, and prorogues the day of judgment till they have obeyed his mandate*. Whence can he get labourers, who can rightly divide the word of truth, who can take pity on perishing sinners, if believers refuse †? Is there any Jonah among us who refuses going to Nineveh? Or are we placed so near the frigid Zone, that, strangers to the sweet influences of Pleiades, we resemble the mountains of Gilboah ‡? so seldom enjoying the smiles of Mazzaroth, that the cords of Orion have enthralled our zeal? Is our fortitude so over-awed, that the frowns of Arcturus and his Sons have made our activity shrink into supineness ||? No: The promises of Jehovah place us on equal terms with those dwelling in happier climes; "I will say to the *north*, Give up; and to the *south*, Keep not back; bring my sons from far, and my daughters from the ends of the earth §." To accomplish this, and such passages in our case, the sovereignty of God was peculiarly displayed in the steps by which the light of Revelation has dispelled from our land the darkness, under whose wings horrid cruelties had their retreat without molestation. In Asia he placed man originally ¶, and made it for ages the land of wonders. In Judea, in Jerusalem, the Mosaic

* Matthew x. 8.

† Of many of the Lord's people respecting the preaching of the gospel, because of relative circumstances, it may be said as of David in building the Temple. 1 Kings viii. 18. They do well that it is in their heart, and their children, like Solomon, may accomplish their desire. Hence, let pious parents imitate Abraham's pattern respecting their household. Gen. xviii. Let Hannah devote her Samuel to Sanctuary work, 1 Sam. i. Let Lois and Eunice teach the scriptures to their Timothy, 2 Tim. i. iii. Nor should opportunities of a finished education be slighted; which, with religious instruction, may bring youth as near to a fitness for the ministry, as human effort is concerned. Thus far parents may proceed, leaving consequences to the Lord, while their religious prudence may decide how far they should consider themselves warranted to advance, did they perceive no tokens of regeneration about their children. Had pious parents been more conscientious in this respect, Christ, we presume, should not have been so straitened for labourers; nor should his vineyard have been so crowded with hirelings. From Sabbath Schools, however, may we not, in course of time, expect a supply? And surely the opulent among the godly have a favourable opportunity for discovering genius and piety among boys in these useful Institutions, which they may be instrumental in cherishing to maturity for the harvest of Christ. Come, then, and take your Moses from penury and obscurity, and appoint him to be nourished and taught in all the learning and wisdom of Science. Exod. ii.

‡ 2 Sam. i. 21.

|| Job xxxviii. 28—33.

§ Isa. xliii. 6.

¶ Gen. ii. 3—13.

dispensation flourished till the advent of the Messiah. There was the Lord of glory born, and crucified. Thence have founded the glad tidings of great joy unto all people. Thus directing our eye to the part which gave birth to the visible causes of our redemption, wonder and gratitude must actuate our minds. Beholding the gospel rejected in Asia, penetrating through Africa, and the storm of persecution wafting it from the southren parts of Europe to our nothern clime, whether shall we exclaim, O the wickedness of men ! O the sovereignty of God ! Considering that, as the gospel was despised, the Prince of darkness was re-establishing his kingdom ; that where Christian churches, of Jews and Gentiles, had once flourished, we can scarcely trace a vestige of undefiled religion ; must not our bowels be moved ? while we are ourselves pointedly admonished, “ Be not high minded, but fear *.” Can we remain idle spectators of the ravages committed by Satan among men ? Verily we are guilty. But how long ? Embracing Jews and Gentiles, let us offer them the gospel, which some of their progenitors rejected, and which others of them brought to our unenlightened fathers. How countless the number gone to heaven, from Europe, Britain, Scotland, the city in which I now speak, and from among our relatives and friends, since the day on which Jesus was crucified in Asia !—how many of the offspring of those who heard and believed, or heard and believed not, as those who never heard his gospel, have since that period gone to everlasting punishment ! The whole inhabited globe commands our sympathy, our exertions.

Hence, O believer, “ Lift up now thine eyes, and look from the place where thou art ; north-ward, and south-ward, and east-ward, and west-ward || ;” and thou shalt command a more extensive prospect than did Abraham. And while we are commanded to preach the gospel to the ends of the earth, the enjoyment of Christ’s presence, to support us and succeed our enterprize, shall accompany us to the end of time §. “ Therefore, awake, awake, put on thy strength, O Zion, put on thy beautiful garments, O Jerusalem the holy city—Shake thyself from the dust : arise, and sit down, O Jerusalem : loose thyself from the bands of thy neck, O captive daughter of Zion,

* Romans xi. 2.

|| Gen. xiii. 14.

§ Matthew xxviii. 19, 20.

Enlarge the place of thy tent, and let them stretch forth the curtains of thine habitations : spare not, lengthen thy cords, and strengthen thy stakes †." Hence, let all of us, who favour the dust of Zion, especially faithful ministers, combining in prayer, influence, wealth, and person, conscientiously dispose of ourselves in the circumstances and stations by which we can most extensively promote the glory of God, and the best interest of men ||. Our feeble efforts, it may be said, are of little avail. Granted ; but let us join them that turn the battle to the gate of the prince of darkness. In the text, we are commanded to pray the Lord of the harvest for labourers. This rightly done availeth much ; and is the least, being the Lord's people, we can do. Time is short. Our little names shall soon be forgotten, and our toils be ended. We must make way for another generation. Our Judge may this moment declare, thou shalt be no longer steward. The ages of eternity are before us. The ways of God towards us and others, with whom we are connected, may remain complicated in the present world : How little a portion of his ways is heard of §. But the light of an eternal day shall display to our admiring gratitude, the steps through which we have been led, the means by which we have been brought to the Saviour, and the gracious fruits produced by our efforts in time : Especially, when the gospel has been published throughout all the earth, when the election of grace is prepared for glory, when all intelligent worlds are judged, when the system of nature is remanded to its original nonentity, when the pendulum of time is suspended in the ceaseless movement of eternity, and when we join the redeemed myriads, in reverential triumph shouting hallelujahs around the throne. Amen.

† Isaiah lii. 1, 2. liv. 2.

|| " Ye will surely say unto me this proverb : Physician, heal thyself." Luke iv. 23. The author having the Gaelic, but no call for it in his present charge, does he conscientiously dispose of himself in the station in which he might be most useful ? Replied : Being satisfied that God fixed the bound of his habitation at Banff, he desires to occupy till his Master come. Acting accordingly, and sensible of the deplorable situation of many of his countrymen, and having a talent of no service here, but for which account must be rendered in the day of the Lord, a call to improve it being his prevailing, his ardent desire, he adopts the language of Isaiah, (vi. 8.) " Here am I, send me."

§ Job xxvi. 14.

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